

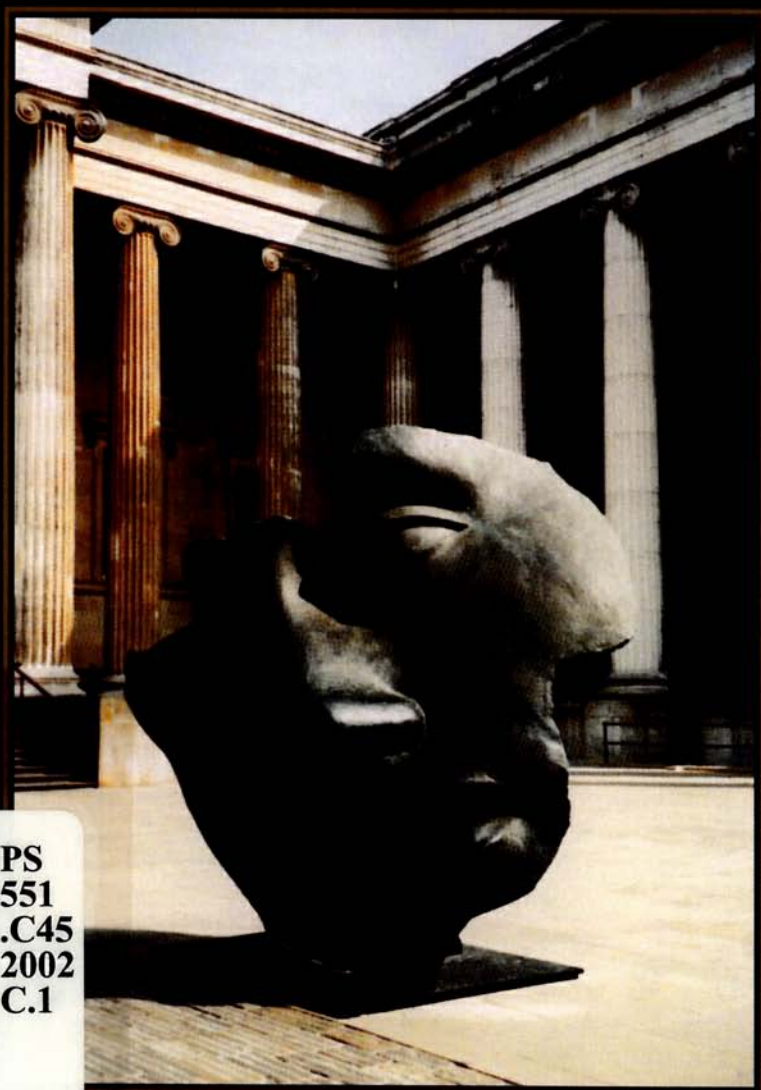
GAINESVILLE COLLEGE LIBRARY



5 0710 01036553 7

The Chestatee Review

S P R I N G 2 0 0 2



PS
551
.C45
2002
C.1

The Chestatee Review

***Volume V
Spring 2002***

***Gainesville College
University System of Georgia***

JOHN HARRISON BOSCH LIB/LRC
Gainesville College
Box 1358
Gainesville, GA 30503-1358

PS551.C45 2002 C.1
#37425502
Chestatee review

Editors' Page

We doubt that anyone can look upon the last six months, or the last eight months, or the last year, and not consider our world to be radically different in at least some fundamental way. College students, who sometimes suffer from the accusation that we are insulated from the "real world," are not immune to this; nor are we at the *Chestatee Review*. We would like to dedicate this edition of the *Review* to the victims of the September 11 attacks, and to their families.

This edition of the *Chestatee Review* is a melange of themes and ideas. We showcase some of the best stories and poems created over the past year by Gainesville College writers. The reader will find herein a range of literary themes: loss, hope, betrayal, friendship, happiness, sadness, and even a little humor. The artwork likewise covers the spectrum from computer graphics to photography to traditional painting. We strove as editors to provide the best cross-section of the works submitted, though of course we received many more submissions than would fit in this edition, and we wish we could have included more of them. We'd like to thank all those who submitted their works, and would like to encourage all our contributors to continue expressing themselves creatively through writing and art.

Our thanks go also to Tom Sauret, without whose encouragement and support this project would never have been completed, and to our editorial staff, especially those of you who did the grunt work: the typing-up, the proofreading, and so on. You know who you are!

Ken Abbott and Matt Lewis

Editor
Co-Editor

Ken Abbott
Matt Lewis

Faculty Advisor

Tom Sauret

Editorial Board

Charles Broadwell
Jessica Davenport
Heather Hodges
Erin O'Callaghan
Josh Poole
Frank Reddy

Editorial Assistants

Sallie Duhling
Monique
Kluczykowski
Andrew McAlister
Glenda McLeod
Jason D. Mosser
Thomas Tuggle
Anita Turlington
Patricia Worrall

Cover Art

Jamie LaNier

Contents

<i>Gambling, Whiskey, and the Grandfather Spirit</i> <i>Selena Johnson</i>	7
<i>Wearing White</i> <i>Ken Abbott</i>	8
<i>Van Gogh's "Night Stars"</i> <i>Dreama Johnson</i>	9
<i>Texas Recollections</i> <i>Dreama Johnson</i>	10
<i>Moving Day</i> <i>Matt Lewis</i>	11
<i>Tomato Kisses</i> <i>Dreama Johnson</i>	25
<i>Mutual Exploitation (Walking to Bourbon Street from the Hyatt)</i> <i>Frank Reddy</i>	26
<i>Don Juan de Quixote</i> <i>Ken Abbott</i>	27
<i>Reprieve</i> <i>Selena Johnson</i>	29
<i>Lisa, in the Stagelight</i> <i>Dreama Johnson</i>	30
<i>Standing Alone by Sister's Hospital Bed</i> <i>Ken Abbott</i>	31
<i>Angry Candy</i> <i>Selena Johnson</i>	32

Closure	34
<i>Dreama Johnson</i>	
Northeast Georgia Interplanetary	38
<i>Matt Lewis</i>	
Fishing on the Red Mud Slides of Lanier	40
<i>Frank Reddy</i>	
Grapes	41
<i>Ken Abbott</i>	
Fetzini's Monkey	43
<i>Tim Anderson</i>	
Sunset on Arabia Mountain	46
<i>Selena Johnson</i>	
A New Day	47
<i>Marlena Childs</i>	
Pushed	48
<i>Blake Duncan</i>	
Mistaken Identity	50
<i>Tim Anderson</i>	
Haiku: Surprise	55
<i>Blake Duncan</i>	
Skip	
<i>Ken Abbott</i>	
Thumbnail Moon	
<i>Selena Johnson</i>	

Grandmother	57
<i>Michelle Morin</i>	
The Concert	58
<i>Clayton Shaw</i>	
Clay	59
<i>Elizabeth Welk-Berliner</i>	
Interview: Elizabeth Welk-Berliner	61
<i>Ken Abbott and Erin O'Callaghan</i>	

Gambling, Whiskey, and the Grandfather Spirit
Selena Johnson

There is a red light on in Cherokee
that gleams in invitational style.

The dewy-eyed Indian girl,
coy in her pigtails,
points the way to a shopping mall.

and I wish it was a ploy
to sell us back the shiny beads we
bartered with:
the chemical-edged feathers
and moccasins made
in Mexico.

Desperation clings to the street-corners
where vendors whore a brown bear to
tourists.

Bear was oblivious, I think. The world
being too cold for His spirit
and It fleeing to the foot-hills
further up and further in.

There, specters still ghost dance;
warring the kudzu conspiracies.
And wisdom is not for sale
but glides like vapor through the trees.

Wearing White

Ken Abbott

They say folks wear white in China
But Pa never knew about things like that.
He gave it his all every day;
Shanghai Coal never had better.

He gave them an eye, back in '73,
from a chunk of steel when a drill-bit snapped;
and two fingers from frostbite, one February night,
at three in the morning and twenty below.

And I don't know how much of his lungs he gave,
how much West Virginia coal inside Pa's chest,
until the hanging wall over the Nine-drift stope,
Gave out one clear day and relieved Pa early.

When they carried him through--
out of the earth and into the earth;
his calloused fingers (all eight of them)
bearing evidence to my diploma--

I was wearing white.

A "hanging wall" refers to an unstable cavern ceiling. "Stope" refers to widening of a shaft so as to follow the vein of ore or coal.

Van Gogh's "Night Stars"

Dreama Johnson

His tapping mark is plainly rendered there,
on shifting waves before a curling shore
where yellow dots come glistening to the fore
as hearthlights burn across the cold, blue air.

In that chilly hush two lovers take the breeze
that blows across the bows of shifting ships
and makes boats sing like boys with wooden lips
as they jump from foot to foot upon the seas.

That some spare pigments on a canvas space,
plied mindfully with brush and palette knife,
can call to mind this cloudless stardrenched sky
which plays upon the waves with subtle grace,
reveals such love within the artist's life
and lays so bare Van Gogh's caressing eye.

Texas Recollections

Dreama Johnson

Horses fret rain dances in the dust,
heralds of summer storms
with lacy manes that snap
in the quick breeze
like pennants.

I mount, reins soft,
miles rendered possible
to jump and trail fingers through
the silky mineral moon.

First tap of rain,
hooves on the sage yellow limestone hills.
I ride, silver sounds of halter,
bright bit with foam from the run.

I never asked them if they
loved the smell of saddleleather,
like freedom,
like wet, black eyes
that rolled with the coming clouds.

Miles rendered possible...
but I left the horses in Texas,
and ache when I remember the moon
within my young grasp.

Moving Day

Matt Lewis

There is really no good reason why I punched my best friend that day.

The temperature was already well above eighty, and it wasn't even nine o'clock yet. Today we were moving Mike to a new apartment. He was going off to college, moving away from the small town we'd both grown up in. I was pissed off. I don't really know why. I guess it was the heat. And Mike was being insufferably happy for some reason. His exuberant good mood had begun annoying me early that morning, when we started packing, and had not stopped since.

We had finished packing the Ryder truck and we pulled the gate down. Mike was trying to force a padlock through the bent and twisted hasp and finally got it locked.

"I don't know why I'm bothering with this stupid lock. What a piece of junk," he muttered.

"Hey, she'll make point five past light speed," I said, automatically, then ducked as he threw a pebble at me.

"Well," he said, "I think that's got it. It only remains for our traveling companion to show up."

"Traveling companion?" I asked. "Who else is coming?" I knew before he answered. "Oh no. Don't even tell me: Marcy, right?"

"Oh, come on, man. She likes you. You really ought to give her a chance. Anyway, I thought you'd like someone to talk to on the way home with the truck."

"Yeah, well, as long as she helps us unload."

"Well, maybe if we ask her really nicely, but she *is* chipping in for gas." I find Marcy mildly infuriating. I've known her for years, and Mike's been trying to set me up with her for a while now. For some reason he thinks we'd make a good pair, and the fact that Marcy seems to think so too doesn't help. She's *is* pretty, I guess, and she's reasonably intelligent, but my cynicism just bounces off her. A car horn beeped, and Marcy pulled into the drive. I groaned inwardly as she waved at us. "Hi guys!" she called, jumping from her car. "All ready?"

"Hey, doll," Mike said. "You've demonstrated your usual cunning in showing up as soon as the work is finished, eh?" He hugged her, then went around to the cab of the truck, leaving us alone. *Oh Jeez*, I thought. *She's gonna hug me*. I hate being casually hugged. Naturally, she attempted to do so.

"Er...hi, Marcy--hey, no hugging, no hugging," I said, extricating myself. "You know I hate that. What are you doing here?"

"Oh, stop it, you big dummy," she said. "I thought you might like somebody to talk to on the way back."

"Oh. Yeah, sure, whatever," I lied. I muttered something unpleasant to myself as she turned to the truck.

"What was that?" she asked.

"Never mind," I said. "Let's get going."

Mike had started the truck. As Marcy and I headed for it, it suddenly struck me that one of us was going to have to sit on the transmission housing. *Hell with that*. As I opened the door, I said, "I call no hump."

For some reason Mike thought this hilarious, and his braying laughter filled the cab. Marcy climbed in first, and I followed her up. The black interior of the truck radiated heat. I had to slam my door twice to get it to shut.

"Great," I said. "Now I'm gonna have to wear my seatbelt in case the blasted door flies open. I hate wearing seatbelts."

"Oh, you hate everything," Marcy said. "Lighten up."

I also hate riding in rental trucks. The cabins are always too small, and I wind up having to steer with my knees and getting cramped legs. This trip I only had to drive one way, to return the truck, but even the passenger side seemed small to me, especially with three people in the cab. The heat of July was stifling, and the truck cab was like an oven. The seats were red-hot, and since I was wearing shorts my legs stuck to the black vinyl. Why do rental trucks always have shiny black interiors? Mike was fiddling with the radio.

"Any preferences?"

"Anything but country, gospel, or pop."

"You ought to be more open-minded," said Marcy. "Listening to something different every now and again wouldn't kill you, you know."

I sighed. *Here we go*, I thought. Mike finally found a station and turned his attention to pulling out of the driveway. Marcy began humming along with the radio. I squirmed in the seat, already uncomfortable from the heat and the stickiness. Finally, I undid the seatbelt.

Sod it. I'll take my chances. My feet went onto the dash, and I slid down further into the seat, trying to get my bare legs off the vinyl.

"What the hell are you doing, man?" said Mike.

"I am trying to get comfortable, as should be apparent."

"*Aa, so desu ne?*"

Marcy jumped in with "*Hai, so desu!*" They were always doing this to me.

"Yes, thanks guys, once again I am mightily impressed by your command of conversational Japanese. Just drive, will you? I want to get this over with ASAP. And pull in at the PetroFast. I needs must have caffeine and nicotine if I'm to make it through this day."

"Yassuh, Massa Boss," said Mike. "To the PetroFast it is!"

"Yeah!" said Marcy. "I need a Coke!"

You need a muzzle, I thought, then felt bad about thinking it. This really wasn't like me. Usually Marcy doesn't get to me *that* much. I usually thought of our sparring as a sort of Hepburn-Tracy kind of thing, but today she was really bugging me. What was the matter with me?

"*Anata no tabako o shimashita?*" said Mike.

"*Iie, watakushi o Coke ikemasu!*" replied Marcy. I sighed. *Gonna be a long trip*, I thought.

We pulled into the gas station and parked. The calves of my legs were already dripping with sweat from the backs of my knees, and I wiped the sweat off with my hand.

Inside the store the temperature was at least twenty degrees cooler. The attendant, an older lady with her hair in a bun, smiled at us pleasantly.

"How ya'll doin' today?" she said.

Mike put on his best Foghorn Leghorn voice. "Exceeding--Ah say exceedingly well, and how are you all this fine hot July morning, Ma'am?" Marcy stifled a fit of giggles.

"Uh, fine, thanks," the clerk said, looking at Mike a little oddly.

"Don't mind him, Ma'am," Marcy said. "He's not right. Y'know--in the head." She tapped her temple and grinned at the lady to let her know she was kidding, and the lady smiled back. I grabbed a Mountain Dew and went to the counter for smokes. The clerk was ringing up Mike's cigarettes.

"What are ya'll doing out in this heat today? You movin' house?" Ah, she'd seen the truck, and had made a Holmesian deductive leap.

"Yes, ma'am," said Mike. "Moving to the University. I start school in September."

"Well, that's nice. Good luck, hon."

"Well, thank you. And thanks for the cigarettes."

"You're welcome, sweetheart." My turn. I placed my soda on the counter and looked in vain for my cigarettes.

"What else, hon?" asked the lady.

"Red Apples, soft pack if you got 'em."

"No, sorry, sweetie. I'm out." *Should have known. Damn. And don't call me "sweetie," dammit!*

"Hard pack?" I asked, expecting the answer *no*.

"Don't have any at all. I'm sorry, hon." *Damn and blast.*

"All right. Er...I guess Marlboros, then." *Dammit. Even the clerks are out to get me today.* I freakin' hate Marlboros.

I also grabbed some sunflower seeds, paid the lady, and left. Back at the truck, there was a brief scuffle for the window seat, but brute strength prevailed, and Marcy sat in the middle again. We cranked up the a/c and Mike and I both lit up.

"Ahhhhh." Mike exhaled slowly. "That's the stuff."

I too pulled gratefully at my cigarette, welcoming the first little jolt of nicotine, even if it wasn't my brand.

"This really is a bloody stupid thing to do, you know. It's gotta be a buck-oh-five in the shade and here we are deliberately inhaling hot air and smoke," I said.

"Yep. Ain't it great?" Mike replied. "As a matter of fact, smoking cools your blood, so you actually feel cooler after you smoke."

"Uh-huh. It must be quite a burden to carry all that useless knowledge in your head."

"Yeah, well, it's the price I pay for being the amazingly cool guy I am."

"Shit." I flicked a sunflower seed at him.

"We'll see how amazingly cool you feel when you're dying of cancer," said Marcy. "And you don't have to take me with you--how about cracking a window?"

Mike did so, and the temperature began to rise steadily in the cab.

"Actually," said Mike, "I'm thinking about quitting."

"Good," said Marcy. "It's a nasty habit. Maybe you should quit too, Jay." She looked at me. "I could help you, if you want. You know, it's a lot easier to quit if somebody helps you, yeah?"

"Mm." I grunted. "Look, you just live your life and let me live mine, OK?"

"Well, fine," she said huffily. "Go ahead and die of lung cancer."

"Thank you. I believe I will."

Mike broke in, "OK, guys, we haven't even started yet. Calm down."

I looked at nothing in particular out of the window.

"Sorry, Mike," Marcy said. She suddenly put her hand on his arm. "So, tell me about this apartment you've got! I bet it's nice, yeah?"

Is it me, or is she flirting with him? I found myself thinking. I shook my head mentally, to clear it. *What if she is? Why should I care?* She and Mike chitchatted as we drove on.

"Can't this thing go any faster?" I said, after a while.

"Watch your mouth, kid, or you're gonna find yourself floating home. There's a governor on the throttle, so no, we can't," Mike replied.

"'Floating home'?" asked Marcy.

Mike glanced at her sheepishly. "Er, it's a *Star Wars* line," he said, as if he knew what Marcy would say.

"Oh, not *Star Wars* again," she said. "Don't you guys ever do anything but watch movies and quote them at each other?"

"Of course we do," I said. "Sometimes we quote *Star Trek* instead." *Ha! That'll teach you to speak Japanese, Marcy.* Marcy, reading my thoughts, thumped me one on the bicep.

We drove on, and when the music on the radio turned to crap, I put in a tape I had been carrying in my pocket.

"Ah, the lilting, mellifluous strains of the Beastie Boys," said Mike as the music began. "Perfect." We both began singing "No Sleep Til Brooklyn" at the top of our lungs. Marcy looked at us as if we'd gone mad. Suddenly the tape squawked and squealed, and then went dead.

Marcy punched it out. "A sign from heaven," she said. The tape had been thoroughly eaten, then snapped by the cruddy tape deck. Marcy looked at me, then with a grin flipped the tape out of the window.

"Hey!--" I started, then, realizing it was gone, I just glared at her.

"Oh, so what," she said. "You saw it; it was chewed up. Anyway, I can't stand those guys. I've got a tape in my purse--Sarah McLachlan--you like her?" Before I could answer, she'd put the tape in and we were listening to Sarah whining.

I looked at Mike for some support, but he said, "Yeah, well, I guess I've heard that tape enough anyway. Never hurts to try something new." *Well thanks for nothing*, I thought. I sat back, resigned. I put my arm on the window opening, and burned myself on the hot metal.

It was about an hour later that things started to go south. The Sarah McLachlan tape had finally finished, and we were in a bad area for radio reception, so there was nothing on the radio but local AM religious jabbering. Damned if we were going to listen to *that*.

We had been driving in comparative silence for a while, when suddenly Mike said, "Something's wrong. With the truck, I mean." He slowed down and looked with concern at the wheel. "I better pull over."

I swore to myself. Aloud I said, "Whattya think? Engine?"

"We'll see," he answered.

He pulled onto the shoulder, and we got out. My legs protested most strenuously at being so misused, and I swore a little more loudly this time. We popped the hood, and steam shot forth like a fog from under it.

"Well, shit a jeezly goddamn," I said.

"At least," said Mike. "Well, I guess we'd better see what we can do about it."

From the cab Marcy called, "Well? Can you fix it?" I went around to her window.

"It looks like the radiator," I said. "We seem to have overheated. Stupid bastards at the rental place didn't check the engine before we got the truck, I guess."

"Oh. Well, it'll be okay. You manly men will think of something."

"I guess so." I went back around to the front of the truck.

"Well?" I asked.

"I dunno. Jeez...."

There was a call from the cab. "Hey guys, didn't we pass a gas station a couple miles back?" We went to Marcy's window.

"Yeah, I think so -- Jesus, Mary and Elvis, you're not thinking of walking back there in this heat?" I said incredulously.

"Well, can you think of anything better to do?" she asked. No, I couldn't. Of course I couldn't. Walking it was, then.

Marcy left a note, in case the police came by, and we set out walking back the way we had come a few minutes before. I couldn't help thinking that the gas station we'd passed was a good deal more than a "couple miles," but maybe I was misremembering.

As it happened, I wasn't misremembering. After a couple of miles, we had seen no sign of the gas station, and I was getting pissed off. The sun bore down relentlessly, and there was no shade, except for the trees lining the highway that were fifty feet off the verge. I was soaked with sweat, but Marcy was tripping along lightly as if she walked miles in blistering heat on a daily basis. I honestly think she was trying to irk me.

An hour and five miles later we finally made it to the gas station. I was drenched in sweat and exhausted. I was in dire need of some ice water and a cigarette. The sign at the station read BUBBA'S COUNTRY STORE and a reader board below it touted the COLDEST BEER IN 3 COUNTIES and informed passersby of the fact that smokeless tobacco products were to be had at special sale prices within. We entered the store slowly, luxuriating in the air-conditioned breeze wafting from inside. Once in, we headed for the cooler and grabbed large bottles of cold water. A small, wizened man with incongruously black hair and similarly colored teeth sat at the ancient cash register and chewed a cigar stub. He was very nearly obscured by a small spinning rack of stickers, most of which served to exhort the populace to violence against those who do not hold inviolate one's God-given right to own high-caliber assault weaponry. He was seemingly overwhelmed by a desire to vocalize the blindingly obvious, as the first words out of his mouth were, "Mighty hot out, ain't it?" Apparently convenience-store clerks had joined Marcy in a contest to be the bane of my existence today.

The little man sounded like a bad imitation of Gabby Hayes, but, encouraged by a jab to the ribs from Marcy, I bit back the instinctive response that leapt to my lips and just said, "Yessir it is. Just need this." I showed him my water bottle.

"Hmm. No price...let's see..." Mike came up behind me and told him, "They're one-thirty-nine, sir. Sign over there." The little man, seemingly surprised that someone would have access to this darkest of arcane knowledge, blinked slowly and rang me up.

"Might you by chance sell engine coolant here? Our truck overheated," asked Mike. The little man stared at Mike for a moment and then blinked again.

"Coolant, eh? Overheated, eh? Happens a lot in this kinda heat, I reckon. Coolant...hmmm. Hmm. Need some coolant, eh?"

"Yes sir, we do," said Mike, with admirable restraint.

"Might have some in the back. Can you wait a minute?" We waited a minute, then several more.

"Christ, what's up with this guy?" I said. "Like a bleedin' refugee from *Deliverance* or something."

"C'mon, Jay, be nice," said Marcy. "You're always so mean about people."

"That is because people in general are not worth being nice about," I snapped.

"Most people are just plain dumb, and only get in my way."

"Well *that's* a nice attitude," she said. "You really need to shape up, Jay."

"Yeah, and you really need a goddamn muzzle." Probably shouldn't have said it aloud this time.

"What? You--"

"Guys, guys--take it easy. It's okay, Jay, the guy's just a little slow. C'mon--he's old." Trust Mike to be so cool about it.

Finally, the little man came out of the back with a dusty bottle of coolant. We grabbed two gallon jugs of water as well. Mike asked if they had a restroom. The little man handed Mike a key tied to a large chunk of two-by-four.

"So's nobody don't steal it, you know?" said the man. "It's round the other side of the store, outside."

"I'll be back in a minute," said Mike. He left, and Marcy and I were left alone with the little clerk, who grinned at us disconcertingly.

"So, where's ya'll's truck?" he asked.

"About three miles up the road." I jerked my thumb in the general direction.

"So what're ya'll doin' out in this heat today?" *Oh Christ, not again.*

"We're moving our friend here to a new apartment, over at the University," said Marcy.

"Oh, movin', eh? Headin' off to college, eh? Well, that's nice. I like to see young folks betterin' themselves." *Oh, God, please make it stop.*

"Yessirree, movin' off to college is a great thing. I reckon ever'body needs to move now and again. Good for the soul. Keeps you from gettin' stuck in one place. Yessir, good for the soul." *Wonderful. Coldest beer in three counties and armchair philosophy to boot. He oughta have a sign, like Lucy: "Philosophical advice: 5 cents."*

"Yeah, I guess so." I turned to Marcy. "Look, I'm going outside."

Marcy followed me out the door. The heat haze rose off the highway in waves, making the air shimmer.

"Jeez," I muttered to myself. "What a redneck. Like damn Barney Fife or something."

"Why do you have to be so mean all the time?" asked Marcy suddenly.

"What?" I asked.

"I mean it. You're always so nasty about other people. You never have anything nice to say about anybody except Mike."

"That's because Mike is the only person who thinks the way I think," I began. She interrupted me.

"That's BS," she said. "You don't even care *what* other people think. What makes you so high and mighty? Who died and made you god of how other people should behave? All you can do is be nasty and mean and dis...dispra..." She fumbled for the word.

"Disparaging?" I said, nastily, and I was stunned by the result. She exploded.

"And you're a know-it-all, too! Well, let me tell you something, Jay. You don't know it all. You don't know anything!"

"What--" I started.

"Shut up! I have tried and tried to be nice to you, to let you know how I felt without pressuring you -- I really try to be nice to you, but you won't let anybody into that little world of yours, will you?"

What? Let me know how she felt? What the hell...

"Hey, wait--" I started again.

"It's all TV and stupid lines from stupid movies. Did you ever have an original thought, Jay? Did you? Everything you and Mike ever say is either a line from some dumb movie or a nasty comment about somebody."

"I--" I started yet again.

"You *shut up* and listen to me for a change!" Her eyes flashed with anger. "You don't seem to realize this, but Mike is leaving. Leaving! Understand? You're not going to have your little narcissistic mirror to talk back to you!"

"Mirror? What the hell are you talking about?" I managed to get in.

"You know perfectly well what I mean! You're going to have to come up with some original thoughts for a change! There's a whole world out there, Jay! Outside of your stupid TV screen! Outside of Mike! There's a world full of people out there--people who are *not* all dumb and ignorant!"

"Hey, I didn't mean--" I started once more.

"*You're* the ignorant one! You don't know anything outside the little box you two live in! You two are so much alike you oughta be married!"

OK, now I was confused. "What in Christ's name are you talking about?" I shouted.

"I'm talking about the fact that in all the time I've known you I've never even seen you two argue! About *anything*! It's not *healthy*, Jay! You need to get out, see the real world! And I just thought that maybe I could...I mean, we could...Dammit, Jay! I can't believe I've wasted my time on you! My friends are right! You're completely unrepentant! *Oooh!*" She spun around and stomped off.

I stood there bewildered for a minute. *What the hell was all that about? Where did that come from? What is going on? Maybe we could...what?* Naturally, fate chose this moment for Mike to return.

"Where's Marcy?" he asked.

"I...I don't know. She went off that way." I wandered off in the opposite direction. Mike followed me.

"What happened?" he asked.

"God, I don't know. One minute she was fine, and the next she was railing at me about being rude and mean and never arguing with you--"

"What?" he asked, confused.

"That's what she said. Hell if I know." I paused. "Do we ever argue?"

"Well, yeah, I mean...I guess so...I...no. Not really. I can't think of a time when we ever really disagreed about anything."

"Do you think that's wrong?"

"Do you?"

"I'm asking *you*!" I shouted. "Is it? Is it unhealthy for two people to never disagree?"

"You want to tell me exactly what the hell is going on here?"

"Dammit, I don't know. Marcy just went off on me. I've never seen her do that."

"Well...you know, you do sometimes have...an attitude...that kinda... pisses people off...." This was new.

"*What?* Not you too! What is this, everybody-come-down-on-Jay day?"

"Dude, relax. I'll go find Marcy, and we'll get going."

"Yeah, whatever. Gimme that key. I gotta take a leak."

Mike went round the corner. I went over to the men's room and unlocked the door. I didn't really have to go, but I needed to think a minute. I stood and looked at myself in the mirror. *What the hell is going on? What was that all about?* Something in me began to nip at the corners of my thoughts. *Is it true? Am I really like that? Maybe...maybe they're right...But what do I do? I can't change who I am! And why should I have to?* I splashed some lukewarm water on my face, and stared at myself in the dirty mirror, watching the water drip off my chin. As I reached for a paper towel, I suddenly heard muffled voices through the door. Mike and Marcy were talking. I guess they didn't realize that I could hear them.

"What did you say to him?"

"I told him the truth. He needs to grow up, Mike. You have, and now it's his turn. He can't rely on you any more. You know what we talked about the other day. I nearly hit you in the truck when you pulled out that *Star Wars* junk. You promised me you'd knock it off with the movie stuff." There was a pause, then Marcy continued:

"I suppose I could have said it differently, but I'd just had enough. He has to learn to not act so superior all the time."

"Yeah, I guess. I wish it didn't have to be like this, though. What did you say about him and me never arguing?"

"Well? You don't! You two have been friends for as long as I've known you, and I've never seen you argue or even disagree about anything. It's weird, Mike. That's all. Just weird."

So that's what's going on, I thought. Those two are trying to straighten me up, eh? How dare they? Who do they think they are? My best friend in the world turning on me? That tears it. A hot feeling welled up inside me, a feeling I hadn't had since I was little. It was the feeling I got when, as a child, I knew I was going

to be openly defiant of my parents. *I am NOT going to do what I am told, and they can't make me!* A tiny voice in the back of my head was telling me that I sounded like an idiot, but I refused to listen to it. This was too fine an anger to pass up. I looked into the cracked mirror above the sink and saw myself flushing red. The tiny voice was telling me that really angry people go pale, not red. Red meant unfocussed anger and embarrassment. You know they're right, it said. I told it to shut up. *I can't believe it! All of this crap just so they could tell me what they thought was best for me?* I felt my hand hurting and realized I was unwittingly trying to crush the cold water tap. I was shaking a little. It seemed odd to equate anger with Mike in my mind. I guess that's what made me so mad. Mike never made me angry. It was one thing I could always count on. *Damn.* Marcy and Mike were still talking.

"So now what?"

"Well, I guess I'll try to mollify him. We seem to have messed up a little. I'll calm him down, and you just keep quiet, OK?"

"OK, Mike. For now."

I splashed some more water on my face and heard them walk off. I decided I'd take the high ground and pretend (for a while at least) that I hadn't heard them. I dried my face, took a couple of deep breaths and opened the door.

As I rounded the corner, I saw them waiting for me.

"C'mon, slowpoke," said Mike.

"Yeah." I spoke sullenly, and passed him without looking at him. I returned the key to the clerk, and walked out, picking up the water jugs on the way. I didn't look at either of them, but just started walking. They began following me back to the truck, talking quietly to each other.

Mike caught up with me after about twenty minutes. He said, "Damn, it's hot, isn't it?"

"Oh, you noticed," I said, rudely. I was beginning to feel the heat really badly again, and the gallons of water were already feeling several times heavier than they had when I'd started out, and this thing with the two of them was really pissing me off.

"Boy, it's gonna be a bitch having to unload all that crap when we get to the apartment," Mike said.

"Don't remind me," I said sourly. "I don't wanna think about it until I actually have to do it."

I usually can't keep a straight face when Mike is teasing me, but suddenly the heat and the walking and Marcy and this plot they seemed to have hatched all came down on me at once. "Yeah, and then you've gotta drive the truck all the way home again," said Mike, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Shut up, Mike," I said quietly.

He didn't hear me, and carried on. "...And it'll probably overheat again, and you and Marcy might even get stranded out in the back end of nowhere..."

That did it. Something snapped. "Goddamnit!" I shouted. "What the hell is wrong with you? Are you *trying* to make me feel worse than I already do?" I threw the water bottles to the ground. "I mean, what the Christ is *wrong* with you?"

"Hey, take it easy, man! I was only kidding around," Mike said, looking at me, slightly alarmed, as if I'd lost my mind.

"Shut up!" I yelled. I decided to confront them. "So you two thought you were gonna straighten me out, huh? Get ol' Jay to grow up and join the real world, right?"

I saw Marcy look guiltily at Mike.

"You, uh, you...heard us."

"Yeah, I heard you! Is that what all this is about? Suddenly I'm too immature for you, eh, Mr. I'm-off-to-college? Is that what it is? You're all grown up now, right? Well, FINE. Be grown-up. Go off to college, get a degree, move away. See if I care!" I hated myself instantly for saying it. *"See if I care?" What was that? Did I really sound that petulant?* The tiny voice in the back of my head was telling me how stupid I sounded. I turned my back to him to avoid him seeing me flushing with embarrassment.

"Look, Jay, you know I have to go! I don't *want* to, necessarily, but it's the only way out. Surely you don't expect me to stay in that podunk town my entire life?"

"No, I don't," I said over my shoulder. "But I do expect you to show a little more remorse, maybe, at the idea of deserting your best friend! I've had to listen to you go on and on about it for months now, ever since you were accepted! I'm sick of it!" I wheeled around and spat the words at him. The tiny voice in my head said *So that's it! That's what you're so pissed off about! You whiny little git!* I wanted to do something to shut the tiny voice up.

"You bastard!" I raged at him. "You're supposed to be my best friend, and here you are screwing me over and running out on me and now I've gotta put up with *her* bullshit on top of it? Screw you, you sonofabitch! *Both* of you!"

And the next thing I knew, I had tacked Mike right in the eye, then jumped on him and knocked him to the ground. The bottle of coolant flew from his hand and spun in the air once before landing completely upright a few feet away. Marcy shouted, "Hey!" and then stood there aghast with her hand over her mouth.

Mike and I rolled on the ground, me throwing wild punches that had little or no effect, and him avoiding them as best he could. Marcy ran to us and began trying to pull us apart without getting hit herself.

We continued to roll around in the dust with Marcy yelling at us to stop. We were so thoroughly involved that we never noticed the police car pull up.

* * * * *

I sat in the cell, leaning my head against the cool concrete wall. Mike sat opposite me, covered in dust and with a nasty-looking mouse growing under his right eye. I guess I was a mess too. We'd been herded in here by two burly officers of the law who appeared to think we were drunk or something. Marcy was in the foyer of the jail, arguing our case with the officer on duty. I didn't dare look Mike in the eye. All I could think was that I had struck my best friend. I was too ashamed of myself to say anything.

We sat for two and a half hours in silence before the voice of the duty officer came through the cell door.

"Well. Glad to see you two've calmed down. C'mon, you can go." The door latch clacked, and the door slid open. Mike and I didn't move for a minute, then he got up and went out. I followed him.

Marcy was waiting for us in the waiting room. She stood up as we came in and smiled with relief.

"Thank God," she said. "I was hoping I wouldn't have to call my folks for bail money. Are you guys okay?"

I couldn't look at her.

"Yeah, I, uh, I'm... okay. Thanks," I muttered.

She smiled at me. "Good. Let's get out of here, yeah? You might want to clean up first, though."

We cleaned up in the restroom (still not speaking to each other), then trooped outside into the heat. An officer came out and offered to drive us back to the truck. He dropped us off and stayed around while we filled up the radiator. When we got the truck started, he said, "You three think you can stay out of trouble?"

"Yessir," said Marcy. "We'll be fine. Thank you."

The cop drove off with a mocking half-salute.

We let the truck idle for a while, just to get it going, and we stood in silence, arrayed around it so we wouldn't have to talk to one another.

Finally Mike said, "I guess it's OK. Let's go."

We went to the cab and Marcy climbed in before me without a fuss. I wanted to say something, to tell her it was all right, she could have the window, but I couldn't find the words. We sat there letting the feeble air conditioner cool us down a little.

After a while, Marcy looked at Mike, then at me.

Mike said he had forgotten to double-check the lock on the back, and got out.

Marcy looked back at me. "Well," she said. I didn't look at her but out of the corner of my eye I could see her shake her head a little. "You two...I don't know."

I knew. This was where she was going to really let me have it. Or so I thought. But when I dared to look at her, she was smiling at me.

"Boy, you two just take the cake, you know?" she said. "I wish I'd had a camera. The look on Mike's face when you hit him was absolutely priceless." I stared at her, but then she said, "No, I'm only kidding. But this day has been one for the books, hasn't it?"

"Yeah," I said sullenly. "A real winner all around."

"Listen, Jay," she said. "For what it's worth, I'm sorry. I didn't realize that you were taking this Mike moving thing so hard. We really weren't trying to conspire against you or anything. Really. I promise." I looked askance at her. I guess I believed her, but I was still torqued off. "I mean it," she continued. "We were only trying to help you out."

"Damn funny way of helping out," I snapped, before I could stop myself. "No--no. wait. Wait, Marcy. I didn't mean that. I guess I'm still mad. I...appreciate, I guess, I appreciate that you were thinking about me. But maybe you could have just told me, or something? Why all the sneaking around?"

"Would you have listened, Jay? I mean, really, without wanting to sound mean about it, you're so stubborn, so sure that you're right all the time, would you have listened? I don't think so."

That made me stop. Stubborn? Was I really stubborn? *Pigheaded, more like*, said the little voice in my head. *Damn. Damn damn damn. Damn if she's not right.*

"Look, Jay. Mike asked me if I'd help you out 'cause he knew you might have a hard time with him moving. We just wanted to, I don't know, draw you out a little, that's all. It's something I'd been thinking about for a while anyway..." She trailed off, and I dared to glance up at her. She was looking up at the roof of the cab. I opened my mouth to speak, but she suddenly continued.

"You know I like you, Jay." Something in the way she said it made me look at her again.

"Maybe you're too wrapped up in your disdain for the rest of the world to notice, but I do like you," she went on. "I really would like to show my friends that they're wrong about you."

My expression must have changed, because she continued, "Oh, yeah, we talk about you. Did you know that almost everybody thinks you're an arrogant boor? *Almost* everybody. I know differently. I've seen little flashes of it, in the way you deal with Mike, and with me, too, sometimes. You, Jay, are a nice guy."

I looked askance at her.

"Don't try to deny it. Underneath that callous, cynical mask you like to wear, you are really a decent person. And all I wanted to do was to bring that decent guy out and let him get some air for a change. Really, that's all it was, I promise." She paused the way people do just before they say "anyway..."

"Anyway. I think you need to apologize to Mike. You haven't, have you?"

"Mnn."

"Have you?"

"No."

"Well then."

My little Magnum PI voice was telling me that there was something to what Marcy had said. I wasn't sure I wanted to listen, though. *Am I really a "nice guy"?* Oh, jeez. Perish the thought! I, the king of the cynics, lord of the misanthropes, a nice guy?

"Look, Jay. I'm not suggesting that you turn into some kind of hearts-and-flowers, goody-goody type. I don't think I could stand *that*. But you need to let more of your real self show through. If not for yourself, for me."

Man. I didn't know. Could I change that much? Was there really that much to change? Maybe I really was a nice person. Suddenly, the thought of being surrounded by people, laughing and having a good time, flashed through my head. *There*, said my little voice. *Would that really be so bad?*

"Ah, hell, Marcy...Maybe...I guess, maybe--"

Mike got back in the cab of the truck. "Yeah, everything's locked up," he said, to no one in particular. Marcy gave me a little jab with her elbow, along with a look that promised a more forceful blow was forthcoming. I cleared my throat. Several times.

"Mike." I said. "I'm, uh. I'm sorry. I've been acting like a complete jerk. I'm sorry I hit you."

Mike stared at a spot on the windshield above the steering wheel for a moment, then a grin twisted across his face. " 'S okay, bro. No major damage done. I guess I kinda deserved it, anyway."

"No," I said, the words coming a little easier. "No, I was wrong. To hit you, I mean."

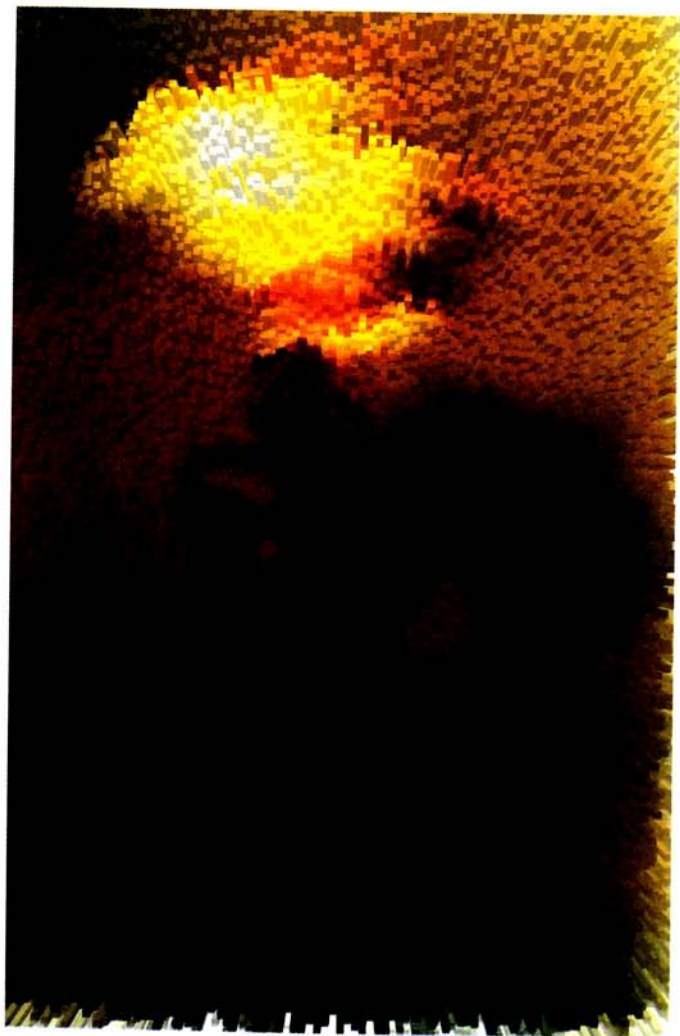
Mike was back to his old self again. "Hey man, no problem," he said.

Marcy looked at both of us, and said, "Well, it's good to see you two playing nice again." She reached out and patted us both on the hands in a motherly fashion. Then she curled her fingers around mine in a decidedly unmotherly fashion.

"Erm," I said, somewhat incoherently. Marcy giggled.

Mike *ahemed* loudly and said, "Well. I guess we need to get moving, yeah?"

"Yeah," I said. Maybe he was right. After all, it's good for the soul, right? Maybe it was time to get moving.



Untitled
Lauren Howard
Computer Graphics

Tomato Kisses
Dreama Johnson

washed with your
cool, blue ice cube eyes
in the thick Georgia summer

drink your lemonade laughs
like nectar

my fair skin seeks your shade;
we move like picnics for comfort

my cheeks blush,
powdered sugar strawberries
to your
fresh, sweet tomato kisses.

Mutual Exploitation (Walking to Bourbon Street from the Hyatt)

Frank Reddy

Is it cheap of me to feel
This way as you hold my hand.
The busted pavement breeds chances for you to
Take my arm, balance yourself
The alcohol took your equilibrium and you can
Lean your head on my shoulder.
I can pretend it's more as I
Prop you up and we stand, individual conspirators, and
We are cheap
This way.

Don Juan de Quixote
Ken Abbott

A slap across the face would have been better--
the pain is quick and clear and gone as quick
with nothing left unsaid.

Should I apologize for my indiscretion? Yes--
and then take my leave and bother her no more,
if that's what I've really done

But her hand did not come near my face;
but stayed there on the love-seat cushion between us
lying there limp-still inside my own

All I could think to do was try to set things right,
and so I set her hand back in her lap,
and kept my own hands to myself.

Seems I make a better Don Quixote than a Don Juan.



Confusion
Charlie Broadwell
Computer Graphics

Reprieve

Selena Johnson

I love the soft and strong of you.
The warm and sandpaper gruff
of three days in my arms and
smiling, drowsy,
sleeps through nights and into next mornings...

And I love the keen way that earnestly
stares through your eyes and into mine,
finding the more and more that beams
at you

through me.

Lisa, In the Stagelight
Dreama Johnson

Her body stands rapt,
transfigured with stillness
in white robes recalling Greece.
Her face and mouth are like stone,
open over a throat that convulses
with the birth of her song.

The sound pours
unplanned from her lips,
articulate in tongues.
It shakes larger than her frame.
Not human, but flowing through her,
made human by transmission.

Does she stand mute, awestruck,
while the primal song plays her voice
like an instrument?
Is she emboldened,
or humbled,
by her utility?

Standing Alone By Sister's Hospital Bed
Ken Abbott

Slow down,
deep breaths,
count to 10.

More than 10 stitches, more than 10 bruises
Count to 100, maybe?

More times than that wearing sunglasses on days that ain't sunny
Long-sleeved shirts on days that ain't cold

Wasn't no accident this time.

Think I might pay him a visit.

See how he likes it.

Angry Candy
Selena Johnson

I am the queen of one thousand chances
that I hand out like candy
at a parade.

Stephanie, however, tried to kill K.C.
She was drunk I heard, and he was unfaithful
not to mention rude;
stabbed him twice with a museum replica:
Julius Caesar's dagger.

Reminder: Redefine the word "irony."
I'd like it to mean something about flowers.
Red ones,
not roses though. . . poppies maybe,
anything that could make me forget
that everything can reduce to a joke.

Et tu, Brute?

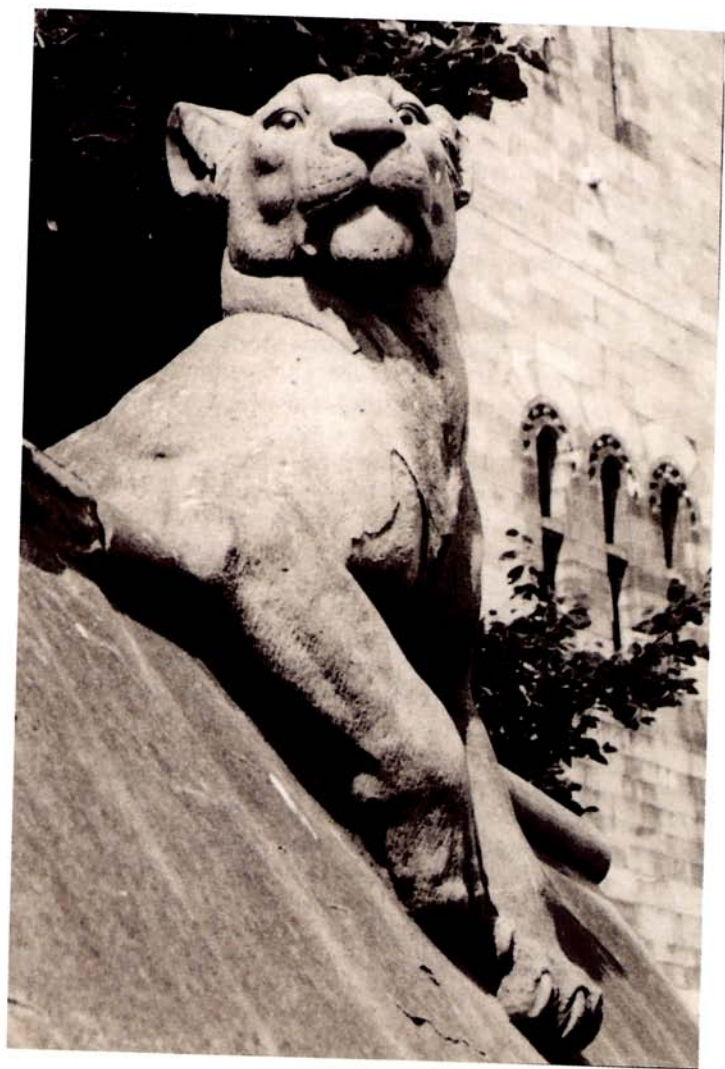
This is a penny dreadful;
couldn't possibly be real.

But I wonder what she felt
as it penetrated his flesh
and he fractured his shoulder
falling through the window.

Eye for an eye, asshole.

Or maybe you got off lucky,
I doubt I could put a price on devotion.
At least the police broke this up
before it could get out of hand.

Makes me question my reign
as queen of one thousand chances
that I hand out
like candy
at a
parade.



Lion of Cardiff
Jamie LaNier
Photograph

Closure
Dreama Johnson

The body was still twitching. Kate watched it warily from the couch. She looked at her watch. Fifteen minutes. It had taken fifteen minutes, and she still wasn't sure if it was dead. "It," because it didn't deserve labels such as "he," or "my boyfriend, Chris." *Ex-boyfriend.* She imagined cartoon X's in its eyes. The image would have been comic, except for the protruding purple tongue and the faint ring of rapidly drying foam on its lips. Her breath caught. The tongue was pierced, and the stud formed a deep pucker in the middle of all the swelling tissue. Remorse seemed to rise up the back of her throat like bile. She swallowed it forcefully. *It was him or me,* she thought. She said it out loud, to convince herself. It didn't work.

If she had chosen to reflect, she might have chosen something pleasant, a memory from before things went bad. Of course, she would still find herself Anywhere, America, Present Day.... She chose not to reflect. The body jerked spastically, one arm knocking into the coffee table. An overturned wine glass rolled across the top and fell with a faint thud against the carpet to seep burgundy onto standard-issue beige. Arsenic is an orangey mineral, reddish, like hessonite garnet, quite lovely, really. Once powdered, it had dissolved fast like sugar in the wine, foaming for an instant, then gone. The body moved again. She watched it clinically.

"You could have run," the body seemed to whisper. "Why kill me?"

Kate looked away, searching the walls for an answer. None was forthcoming. The body wasn't satisfied. It continued to speak.

"All our history, all the things I did for you, and this is how you repay me?"

"Justice." As single-word responses go, this one sounded weak. Especially in light of the 280-pound flopping mess on the floor. Kate picked up the phone and dialed her best friend, DC.

"*Konnichi wa!*" The voice on the other end of the phone seemed discordant, too cheerful for the circumstances. Kate paused, uncertain.

"Hello?" he repeated, startling her to speech.

"Hi, it's me. Are you busy?" Her voice sounded odd, flat.

"Not really. What's wrong?"

"Nothing. But I have a piece of furniture I want to get rid of. I need you to help me carry it." There was a very long pause. She was certain he caught her drift.

"Oh." Yes, he was a quick one. "I'll be right over."

She hung up the phone gently, as if to preserve the quiet of the room. The body had stopped moving. It seemed to stare at her.

"What are you going to do, now? Chop me into little pieces?"

"If need be." Kate settled back on the couch to smoke a cigarette. The rising smoke curled misty snakes on her breath to break and dissolve in the air. She wished the body would stop talking. It didn't occur to her to question her sanity.

Its eyes were yellow. Their blood vessels had burst to add a framework of scarlet lines. They looked like oddly colored marbles. She had never been able to imagine glassy eyes before, but there they were.

"Ah, come on, Kate. We had some great times, didn't we?"

"Oh, yeah, great times." Kate took a sip, then a gulp of her wine. It had gone flat and stale. She tossed her head back and drained the glass, then poured another and drained it, too.

The body started singing.

"Dees nut Sonya chin..."

"Stop that." Kate stabbed her cigarette out viciously.

"Or what? You'll... kill me?" It chuckled.

She glared at it.

"You're so sexy when you're angry..." the body mused in a tawdry voice.

Kate laughed morbidly. "I never understood that. You provoked me because it made me sexy, then you got upset that I was mad at you. I use the past tense because I don't think you'll get any more chances to play that little game."

"I seem to be doing a pretty good job of it now, don't I?"

She heard a sound. It was her teeth grinding together.

Where is he? What's taking so long? Kate was beginning to get restless. It seemed to her that the body had begun to stink, but she knew that that must be her imagination. She lit incense anyway. The body had been quiet for some time. Looking at it, she never realized how large it had been, broad in shoulders and chest, heavily muscled like a big cat. When it spoke again, she jumped.

"Hey, put on some music. I need some B. Boys."

"Do it yourself." The silence was interrupted by the doorbell. *Finally*. Kate went to let DC in. He looked pale to her, but she knew he would help. It never occurred to her to doubt it. There was a bumper sticker on his truck that read "Friends Help You Move; Real Friends Help You Move Bodies." DC was definitely a real friend.

"In here." Kate led him to the living room.

"Jesus." DC sat down and put his hand over his mouth.

"I can't believe you did it... I mean, I never knew someone more deserving, but..." He seemed tense. Kate sat next to him and they both looked at the floor.

"Well, it's done now. Help me get rid of it?" She was glacially calm.

"How?" DC kept his eyes averted from the corpse.

"I'm not sure. I should have thought about that before. Maybe a bathtub full of bleach? With the jets on, it shouldn't take more than eight hours to dissolve the flesh. Then we could bust up the bone with a sledgehammer."

He looked at her face carefully. He seemed pale.

"Uh, yeah, that might work, but dear God, what a mess."

"In the lake?"

"Not a good idea. Might be found."

"We could bury it. With quicklime, in the woods."

"Too much quicklime preserves a body. I saw a documentary about some resistance fighters who murdered German officers and got caught that way."

"Well, then I guess we'd better not use too much." Kate stood up and brushed her hair out of her face. "Home Depot is open twenty-four hours downtown. They'll have it."

"Alright. Just hope we don't get stopped."

They had wrapped the body in glossy black trash bags secured with duct tape. It made a neat package, buried under camouflaging layers of junk. Kate tapped her fingernails against the armrest, counting the highway lamps as they slid by the cab of the truck. They seemed to tick past slowly, sending reflections of arc-light orange flashing across her face.

"So, where we going?" the body asked from the bed behind her.

"The woods." DC looked up at her voice.

"Hmmm?"

Kate shook her head.

"I was just thinking out loud. Are you sure these woods are what we need?"

DC signaled and changed lanes.

"Yeah, my Uncle Jim's place, twenty acres or so, out in the middle of nowhere. By the time anyone could find it, there will be nothing left."

Kate nodded. She thought she heard movement in the back.

"Oh, goody, a picnic in the country." The body giggled. "Did you remember the wine?"

She pulled her coat closer and returned to counting the street lamps.

The sky was just beginning to show the faint stain of false dawn by the time the hole was deep enough. Kate could hear the body singing from the back of the truck. DC threw aside his shovel to lend her a hand up out of the pit. It rang dully against the dirt. As they crunched back toward the truck for their cargo, the singing stopped.

"You're back! And not even a kiss hello...."

Kate grabbed the ankles and helped drag the body over the tailgate. Its head hit the ground and bounced a little. They rolled it into the pit. It seemed to blend with the shadows. Kate could just discern it by slight reflections.

"You know, you've got a funny idea of justice.... if you didn't love me anymore, why didn't you just tell me?"

"I did. You wouldn't leave. I was a possession to you." Her voice was thick and low.

DC paused in the act of upending a bag of quicklime and looked at Kate in concern.

"Are you talking to me?"

Kate shook her head. DC gazed at her uncertainly for a moment, then looked away and wiped his mouth on his sleeve.

"Sounds like a pathetic excuse for murder to me." The body spoke in a high sing-songy voice. "But officer, he didn't *respect* me...."

Kate's face flushed.

"How about rape? Is that reason enough for you?" She was beginning to pant.

"Kate?" DC moved as if to touch her. The body continued, ignoring him.

"Oh, now *that's* a rough word. You even sound like you believe it. You know, babe, I always knew you were unstable, but I never realized you were delusional, too."

Kate's jaw dropped.

"Delusional? You think I imagined it? *Three times?*"

Kate heard laughter. DC's eyes were wide with fear. He quickly returned to the sack, dumping it hastily in the pit. White powder cast the bottom in sharp relief.

"Ah, come on, lighten up," the body continued. "I knew it was a game to you." The high pitch returned, mocking in that tone she had always despised. "'Oh, no, please, don't, please, stop!' But you sure didn't fight very hard, did you? No, you didn't put up much of a struggle at all..."

She grew distant, remembering how her tears had pooled in her hair, on the pillow.

"Struggling wouldn't have done any good."

"So it was better to give up than to risk being beaten. Brilliant reasoning."

"You don't understand."

"I think I understand perfectly. I think you need to ask yourself, who really deserves to be down here?" The body chuckled as Kate took up a shovel and began throwing arcs of dirt into the hole.

"On second thought, I think you already know."

"Shut up."

As dirt filled the hole, the voice grew muffled and distant. Kate moved faster, eager to finally be rid of it. DC worked frantically beside her, uncertain of the rush but infected by her need to be gone.

The voice was a whisper as they mounded the last of the soil on top.

"Maybe I'll see you around."

Kate turned to DC, her shoulders slumped with exhaustion, and caught his eye. Sunrise was just beginning to cast its first moist light through the trees. His face was drawn, his eyes tight with tension.

"Let's go home. You need rest."

Kate smiled, absently rubbing at the stains on her hands.

"It was him or me, you know."

DC didn't speak, but only nodded as he started to move her toward the truck.

"It was him or me." It sounded much more reasonable in the sunlight. In the silence.

It sounded so much more reasonable.

Northeast Georgia Interplanetary
Matt Lewis

After a heavy rain, the clay clung to our shoes--
Thick pads, red and orange,
That sucked and slurped with every footfall.
And we slogged slowly, at least for a few steps.

The weight and the color led my brother
(Erudite and educated, even at nine), to say
We were walking on Jupiter, by way of Mars.

Our weight grew with every step
Until the heavy mud, obeying gravity,
Peeled away in great cleat-mirrored clumps,
And we leapt lightly, at least for a few steps.

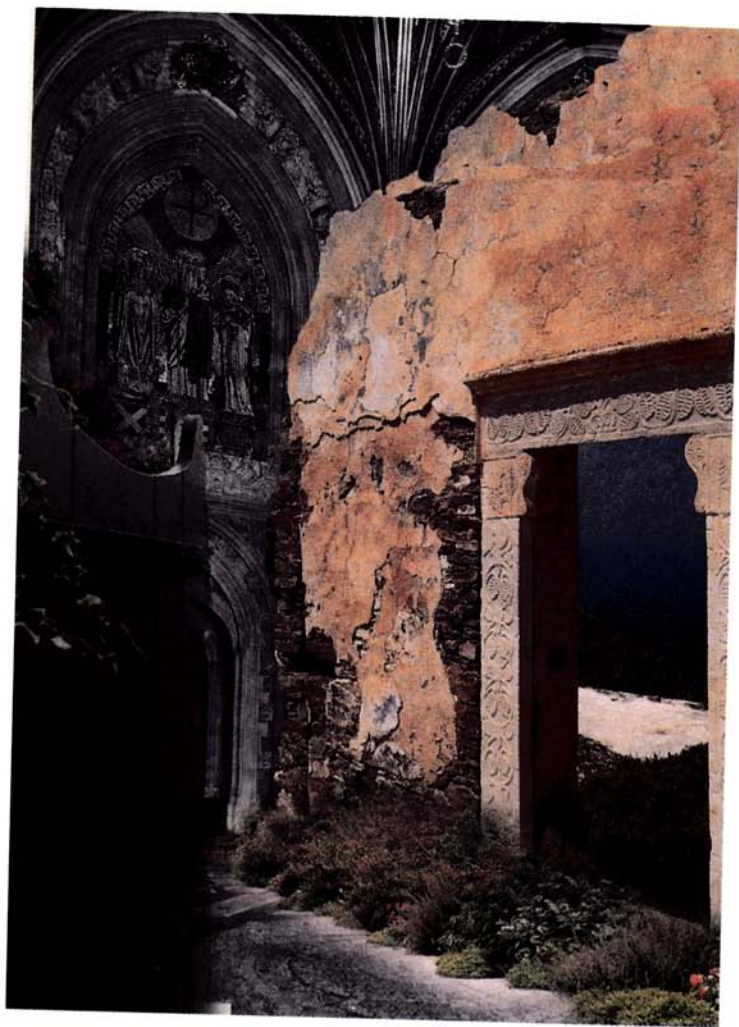
The lightness and the footprints led my brother
(Erudite and educated, even at nine), to say
That we were walking on the moon.

Growing up, I lived for lightness,
Concerned for no one but my lunatic self,
I leapt along through lunar landscapes,
Happy in my foolishness and featherweight joy.

My brother, though, was different.
His mind (while erudite and educated) was darker, heavier,
Laden under weights I could not see or comprehend.

And late one night, when the moon was full,
He called me, telling me he was tired.
Wearied of the weight, the Jovian load he carried.
And saying he had, at last, found the way to lighten it.

By the time I got there, it was too late to save my brother
Who had been so erudite and educated
Even at nine.



Untitled
Amy Pippin
Computer Graphics

Fishing On the Red Mud Sides of Lanier
Frank Reddy

Corporate rocks, jagged, protruding:
Lounge chairs.
I mash the rancid dough bait:
A teardrop of chum, onto my hook.
Cast line into green water.
My Jesus Christ bobber is an orange and white globe of unknowing confession.
My friend's got the Peter bobber.
Curse at him, reel in, cast mine aside.
I can feel a true tug without it.

Grapes
Ken Abbott

Hello, my friend!
I have grapes!

You can have some if you wish--
come, I will show you the vine.
There are far too many there to count;
enough for everyone with much to spare.
The grapevine is not mine, but I know the One who owns it,
and these grapes are here for everyone.

What? I am arrogant--but how?
I never said that I deserve these grapes
any more than you--I want you to have some.
Nor must you go through me to find the vine,
although you must go to the vine to get the grapes,
and I want to show you where it is.

Just how was this vine planted?
That I do not know, though I can tell you
how it grew and where and why the grapes are here.
Why do you instead go to a thornbush,
adorned with pretty-looking flowers,
and feel among the thorns for fruit that is not there?

And now I truly do not understand...
You ask me how I know this vine has grapes,
while I stand here smiling, grapejuice in my teeth.
The smell and taste are with me still.
And with those, I cannot look at what is right in front of me,
and make myself believe there's nothing there.

But if you still think me arrogant because I own this vine,
I tell you again, it does not belong to me!
The one whose vine it is will let me eat,
until I've had my fill, and come again,
and offers this to you as well.
All I had to do was ask.

The Vine is here for you, my friend.
Come, have some grapes!



Untitled
Dreama Johnson
Painting

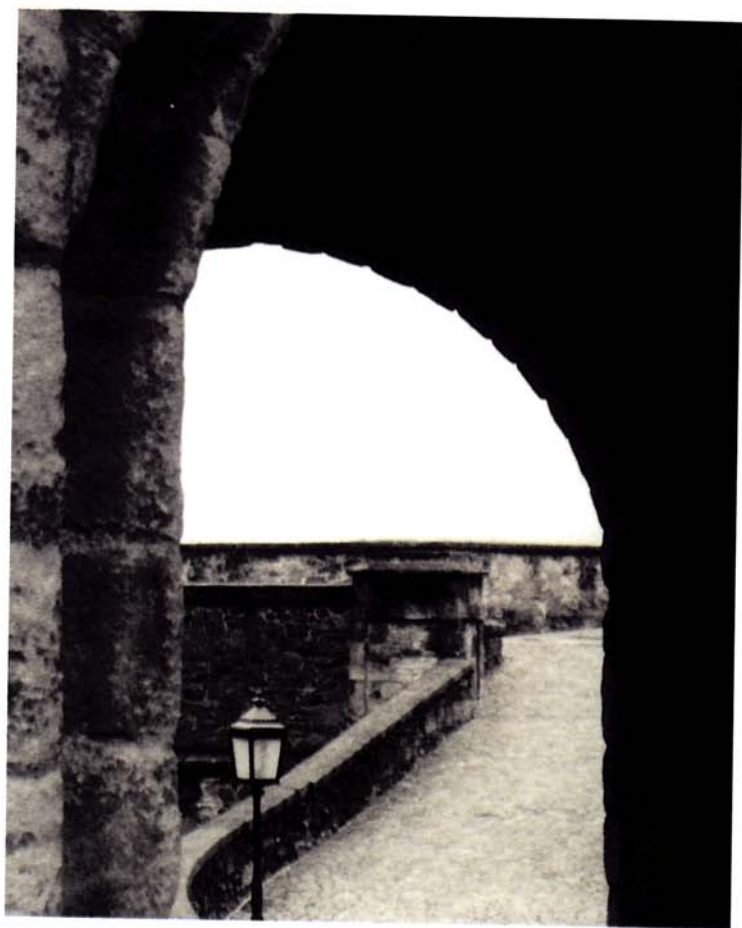
Fetzini's Monkey

(Fet-see-knee)

Tim Anderson

The world is a circus
And Fetzini built the circus
So in all actuality
Fetzini built the world
And the world was his circus
And the circus was his world
But Fetzini's greatest love
Was his monkey
Something he loved so much
He gave his own name to
And so the day came for the circus
And all the people came
And as the circus started
Out came Fetzini
And Fetzini cried out to the people
"I give you my love, I give you my circus"
And the people cheered
Then the jugglers began juggling
And the people clapped
And the clowns began clowning
And the people smiled
And the elephants began marching
And the people booed
They booed and threw popcorn with their hate
Cursing Fetzini
"We want more
More than you've shown
More than you have
More than you've given"
And at that moment
The lion would have gladly given his cage
To the true beasts of the circus
The audience
Fetzini was devastated
His very own world turned against him
And in the midst of all the hostility
All the hate
All the anger
All the rage
Sat Fetzini's monkey
Then, above every scream in the audience
The monkey let out the most unbearable cry
And the people, as if muted in silence,

All turned to the monkey
And the monkey raised his hand in the air
As if to touch the top of the tent
And as he turned to Fetzini a tear ran down his face
Then with a movement as swift as lightning
Fetzini's monkey plunged his hand through his chest
And pulled out his heart
For the monkey loved Fetzini and Fetzini loved the circus
And the monkey laid his heart on the circus floor
And the monkey died
And the people cheered
And Fetzini cried



Untitled
Jamie LaNier
Photograph

Sunset on Arabia Mountain

Selena Johnson

The sun gores the horizon
as though loath to flee
to submit once more
to its complacent twin.

As though it fears an ending
and grasps the violent sky
rending it in bloody
tangles of clouds.

And then the cycle of all natural things
pulls it back under
into obscurity.
but still it shows

In the eyes of this granite hillside;
the unrelenting puddles
burn still in effigy.

Until the night reclines there too,
fleshing all extremities
and buoyant
with its Cheshire cat smile.

Someday
I will forgive myself
for being
flawed.

A New Day
Marlena Childs

the sun evolves from the clouds
a car alarm sounds
a reminder of where I am.
people bustle by
hurrying to their destinations
there is always a place to be
not always where I want to be
but today I am here for me
college is the only way
to reach my dreams
yesterday was just a day
but today...

I step out into a new day

Pushed
Blake Duncan

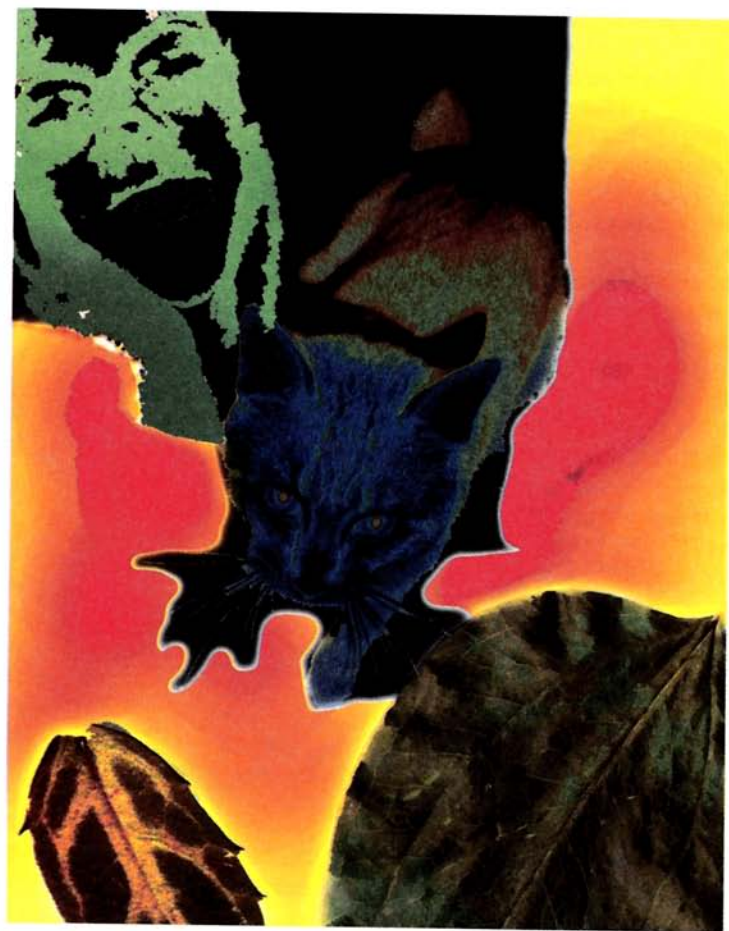
My pusher knows me well,
for he never ceases to amaze me,
he continually brings what I need,
and I know I should kick the habit.

But who really cares?

You, or you, or maybe you,
no, you don't care and you know it,
if you did, you'd stop me.

My pusher though, he really cares,

I give him my twenty,
he gives me happiness,
we all go away satisfied.



Untitled
Terry Emmett
Computer Graphics

Mistaken Identity

Tim Anderson

The interrogation room is small and dark. A large table sits in the middle of the room, while a mirror and door are the only accessories to the four walls. The ceiling contains thirty-four tiles; I counted them twice. The only sound in the room is the quiet flickering of the fluorescent lights. Buzz buzz buzz is all they say.

Overall, this is perhaps the best apartment I have ever lived in. Sure I may only be here for a few hours, but I don't have to pay rent and my only roommates say nothing but buzz buzz buzz.

The door swings open and my landlady enters. His name is Officer Cliff Brown.

"You could have knocked before you came in."

"Just sit down wise guy."

I sit down and he lays a stack of papers and folders down on the table across from me. He starts to walk around behind me but soon begins to pace.

"You sick son of a bitch."

"Could you please sit down? You're making me dizzy."

He quickly slams my head down on the table. He sure has some aggression built up in him. Brown leans over into my ear.

"You're one sick puppy."

He lets my head go and walks around the table. Seating himself behind his fortress of papers and folder, Brown readies himself for the attack to come.

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why what, why are you here?"

"Because you and the kind Sane Police Department thought that I should be here. Can I have a cigarette?"

"You can't have crap until you talk."

"But I can't talk unless I have a cigarette."

Officer Brown gives me a look and then pushes me a pack of cigarettes and some matches. I look down and grab a cigarette and light it blowing smoke in my landlady's direction.

"Talk."

"What do you want to know?"

"Everything. Everything about that night."

"Are you sure you want to know?"

Brown pulls out a tape recorder, puts in the tape, and starts recording. I take this as a yes. The battle lines are drawn, and I am going to make the first attack.

"It was eleven o'clock..."

"A.m. or p.m.?"

"It was eleven o'clock p.m."

After saying p.m. I give him a long sarcastic stare.

"Just continue, asshole."

"I was driving down the road in the undercover squad car..."

"In Deputy Dick's squad car?"

I'm still an immature man, so I chuckle at the word "dick."

"Ha, I don't know whose squad car it was, and to me you're all dicks."

"Deputy Dick Jefferson, the finest police officer in the town of Sane."

"Sure."

"Was he already dead?"

"Yes, but I didn't kill him."

"You didn't kill him, huh? We found him in the trunk of the squad car that you were out driving around in. He also had two bullets in the head."

"Two?"

"Surprised?"

"No, I just thought that there were more shots fired than two."

"So you admit it?"

"Admit what?"

"Admit killing Deputy Dick."

I chuckle again.

"I didn't say I killed him. I just said that I thought that there were more than two shots."

"Well, then who shot him?"

"I don't know; I was in the trunk of the squad car."

I guess what I say is a bit confusing to Officer Brown because he quickly stands up and starts pacing again. The room is silent for the moment, so I light another cigarette. Pretty soon the fluorescent lights break the silence with buzz buzz buzz. My landlady soon joins in.

"What do you mean you were in the trunk?"

"I mean that I was stuffed in the trunk of the squad car."

"Who put you there?"

"Deputy Dick, I guess."

"Deputy Dick Jefferson?"

"The finest police officer in the town of Sane."

"Why?"

"I don't know; you're the one who said he was the finest."

"No, why did he put you in the trunk?"

"Maybe it's because I was sleeping with his wife?"

"Mary?"

"I don't know her name."

"You're sleeping with her, but you don't know her name?"

"Names make an affair personal. We both got what we wanted, and that was it."

"O.K.--this doesn't make any sense."

Brown reaches over and grabs a cigarette. I light one too.

"So you're having an affair with Dick's wife, Mary."

"No."

"No? That's what you just said."

"No, because now it's Dick's widow, not Dick's wife."

"You sick son of a bitch!"

"Hey! She's not the one that's dead, he is. Now, if she was dead, then I would be the sick son of a bitch."

"Anyway, continue."

"Sleeping with Dick's widow? I had planned on it, but I assure you, now that I have your blessing it will mean a lot more."

Officer Brown slams his hands down on the table.

"Continue with your story of that night's events."

"I need some coffee. I can't talk without coffee."

Officer Brown, the finest interrogator in the town of Sane, gets up and leaves the room to get my coffee. Once again the room is silent, and the first battle is mine. Buzz, buzz, buzz. The lights agree. Officer Brown, the finest interrogator in the town of Sane returns with my coffee in two cigarettes' time. He walks straight in and puts the coffee on the table.

"Finish."

"The coffee?"

"No wiseass, your story."

I can see that my dumb head and my wise ass are really getting on Officer Brown's nerves. So I think that I'll let him win this round. After all, he did make me coffee. I light a cigarette and tell him my story.

"I was working at the supermarket as a bag boy. Well, one day this woman comes through the checkout lane..."

"Mary?"

"Yes. Mary, the widow of the finest police officer in the town of Sane. Well, she comes through and asks me to help her with her bags. The next thing I know we started talking, and over a period of time started having sex. And that's all I'm going to tell you."

"What do you mean that's all? You didn't even explain the murder."

"I'll get to the murder in a second."

"But you said that's all you were going to tell me."

"About the sex, yes."

Officer Brown really has some issues with sex. He also has a lot of built up aggression... Poor guy probably hasn't had sex with the Mrs. in a while.

"It will pass."

"What will pass?"

"Did I say that out loud? I'm sorry."

A silence falls over the room while I light another cigarette. Except for the lights. Buzz buzz buzz. They think it is funny.

"Well last night, Mary and I are up at the Traveler..."

"The Traveler?"

"The Traveler. It's this cheap motel up on the hill."

"O.K."

"I go outside the room to get some ice, and when I open the door, Officer Dick is standing there."

"So Officer Dick found out about you and his wife's affair and came up to the motel to confront you."

"I guess."

"What do you mean you guess?"

"Well, you see, it was kind of funny. When I opened the door and saw the officer, I knew that we were busted. So I turned back into the room and mouthed to Mary that it was her husband and that she should lock the door behind me and hide..."

"But he busted in..."

"No, instead he just told me that he was on an undercover drug bust and that I would be safer in the room."

"So you went back in the room."

"No, I tried, but she had already locked the door."

"So what did you do?"

"Well, just then a car turned into the far end of the parking lot. Officer Dick thought that I would blow his cover, so he told me to hide in his trunk. I heard the car pull up. I heard a commotion. Then I heard the shots."

"So how did you end up driving the car with Officer Dick in the trunk?"

"I waited until I heard the other car drive off. Then I got out and looked at Officer Dick's body. All of a sudden I heard a shout from the other end of the parking lot. Fearing for my life, I threw Officer Dick in the trunk and drove away. About ten minutes later I was pulled over and brought here."

"Why didn't you explain this to the officer who pulled you over?"

"I tried, but you guys aren't too forgiving to guys driving around in a stolen squad car. Not to mention that I had a dead or almost dead cop in the trunk."

Officer Brown sits across the table with a confused look on his face. He grabs a cigarette and lights it.

"Well, I guess I am done with you. I have your statement, and as long as everything you say holds up, you should be fine."

"So I can go home?"

"Yeah, you can leave; I just wouldn't recommend leaving town anytime soon. So follow me and we'll go get your stuff."

And with that my lease is over. I say a silent goodbye to the lights and they reply buzz, buzz, buzz. Then I follow my landlady Officer Brown out of my apartment and to, ironically, Officer Dick's desk to pick up my things. I know it is Officer Dick's desk because there is a picture of his widow on top of it. It really is a beautiful picture of her, in a frame that says "My loving wife." All of a sudden I can't help but feel guilty.

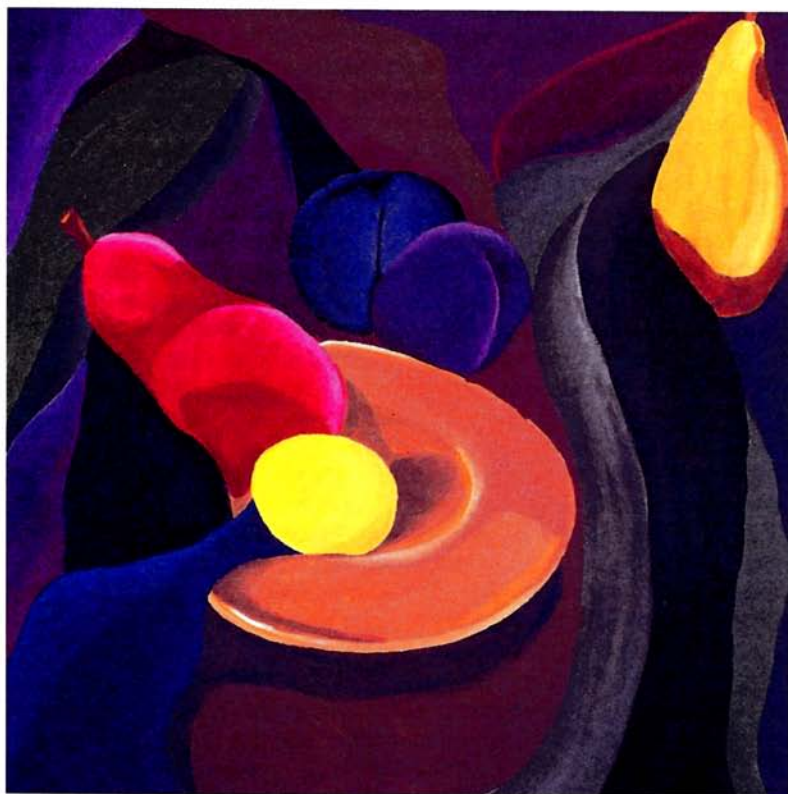
"Well, I guess you guys are going to clear off this desk."

"What do you mean?"

"Well Officer Dick is dead."

"But this is my desk."

"Then why do you have a picture of Officer Dick's wife on your.... Oh hell."



Fruit Bowl
Terry Emmett
Painting

Haiku

Surprise

Blake Duncan

A manhole cover
hides in the campus
waiting to be found.

Skip

Ken Abbott

I watch my image
pick up a flat rock to throw.
The ripples break me.

Thumbnail Moon

Selena Johnson

I must be the world
for my shadow to stand so
plainly on her face.



Untitled
Jamie LaNier
Photograph

Grandmother
Michelle Morin

Filled with cheap candies,
A misused ashtray
Perched on a smoke-steeped cushion
Is emptied by my sticky fingers.
She enters, bag in hand.

Her shaky grip
On my dream on paper,
In reds and blues still stained on my hands,
Is brimming with pride.
My soiled hand
Sets in a print that goes unnoticed
On her starched white tablecloth.

White lily,
Limply clasped in her hands,
Is soft to the touch by my stubby fingers.
Her hand is soft, too,
And cold, and still.
Through my eyelashes,
I still see her hands shake.

The Concert
Clayton Shaw

I swim with my friend in
The deepest part of the ocean,
Anxiously waiting for the calm to pass.
While treading water, I crunch plastic cups under my feet
And breathe in the smell of this pungent mass
With whom I float shoulder to shoulder.

When the storm is introduced, all calm is lost.
Lightning and thunder explode before us
As we are grabbed by the current.
The flow carries us closer to the storm,
And we listen as the ocean chants with the thunder
Beneath shooting beams of reds and yellows.

I'm rocked by the beat and throw up my arms, and I notice
A jetsam of flying water bottles, cans, and shoes being tossed above.
The fearless rise above the waves,
Surfing this violent ocean, not knowing when they will
Crash and become lost once again like me,
As I struggle to keep my eyes on the storm.

Briefly the thunder stops,
Yet the ocean has not tired.
Instead it begs for a final thrill,
An encore by the storm, creating
A whirlpool of waves in front of us.
They become trapped smashing against each other.

I fight my way from the chaos,
Still chanting with the storm's rhythm
I circle around;
Realizing my friend is lost,
but I know we shall reunite when calm returns.

Clay
Elizabeth Welk-Berliner

So base, it's not even a metal in the hands of its maker,
not useful for swords and weapons of glory,
but drinking bowls, delicate art.

Children love the ruddy, red-brown color,
the slippery feel of a bowl under pressure,
the way it rises from the wheel or retreats,
defeated. Forget to pound the air out,
and the firing is a quick death;
the clay blows out like a brain under pressure.

Yet, so much pleasure in the hands of the potter.
He breathes into his cupped hands to warm them each morning,
knowing the clay will rise to meet him,
respond to his most delicate desire,
The feel of earth, the long lost smell is hopeful,
reminds him of the first clay worked, the first potter.



Elizabeth Welk-Berliner

Interview with poet Elizabeth Welk-Berliner

Elizabeth Welk-Berliner has been an instructor at Gainesville College for the last three years. Among her credentials are an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Maryland and a PhD in Creative Writing and Literature from the University of Houston. Her work has been published in the *Western Humanities Review*, the *Edge City Review*, and a variety of other publications; her poem "Clay" is printed here with her permission.

CHESTATEE REVIEW: When did you start writing?

ELIZABETH WELK-BERLINER: Actually, I started writing late. I was in college working on a degree in microbiology when I decided I was interested in taking a survey class in creative writing. I found poetry was quite a bit easier for me to write than fiction was. After I worked full-time for three years, I went back to school, majoring in English. By then I was in my early 20's and I was pretty sure I wanted to write poetry. I always thought it was strange that other writers knew they wanted to write when they were really young. This was something I came to gradually, when I was older.

CR: How long after you started writing did you start to publish work?

EWB: Actually, I've done everything on a slower schedule. When I finished my undergraduate English degree, I decided to go to grad school and get an MFA. I primarily worked with poetry then, learning how to write it, how to read it, and I really didn't start publishing until I was in the middle of my Ph. D. quite a few years later. I'm still working on it.

CR: Which writers to you most admire; which had the most influence on your style?

EWB: I think it's hard to talk about influence on my own writing. I can talk about writers I especially admire, and those I deliberately emulated.... When I first started to write, I was especially interested in Theodore Roethke and James Wright. They both have a fair number of short lyrics that are very accessible, that deal with some very basic concepts--archetypal concepts, like dark and light--that I was trying to understand and that I still work with. Now I especially like Wallace Stevens--the intellectual work that his poems do and the flexibility that he has with language, the way he plays with it.

CR: How have you been influenced by other art?

EWB: I think the concept of beauty is very central to my writing, and I have a long poem that deals with that--it's about the life of the Spanish painter Francisco de Goya. Beauty, I think, has been valued in some very interesting ways, and especially when we look at its relationship to art and religion. Sometimes when I look at the incredible art that's been produced in the name of religion, like for instance the Sistine Chapel, I wonder what people are worshipping when they go there. I also think beauty is important for me, in terms of my writing, because it seems central, not only to life, but to art, which imitates life.

CR: What do you think of the importance of education? Do you think the self-educated poet is a rarity, or that most of the schooling isn't truly needed?

EWB: No, I don't think it's necessary, or at least I don't think it should be. Oddly enough, it seems that many poets these days not only have four years of college under their belts, but also some graduate school. MFA programs, in particular, are very popular, and there have been some complaints about that, that the writing produced in these programs is somehow similar and no longer unique. I expect strong writers are always going to find ways to be unique, and weak writers are often going to sound like someone else, so this argument seems silly to me.

CR: What do you think of revision? Some people revise constantly, while others refuse to touch a poem once it's on paper? Do you think that this is just a preference, or that one group is doing it wrong, one way or the other?

EWB: I do think that the act of revision is a necessary step in the production of a good poem. I'm a poet that sometimes writes short poems very quickly and with what seems like little effort, but even these poems require revision. I think it would be the rare poet that could say what he wanted to say on the first go without modification--in fact, I've never heard of a major poet that could do that.

CR: Is writing a serious thing to you, or should a writer "play" a little?

EWB: I would have to say that I take my writing seriously, but I wouldn't call it "serious business." My writing is never as important to me as my children, my husband, my life. It doesn't always feel separate from all of that, but I'm always aware that it's something I have to take time out of my other activities to do. I would by no means claim that it's at the top of my list of priorities, although I enjoy it and for me it's something that's fun.

CR: You've had the privilege--or the burden!-- of looking over poems submitted for the Gainesville College Writing Contest. With that in mind, what advice do you have for aspiring writers?

EWB: I think that most poems, regardless of who's written them, could do with more attention to detail. I think that we understand poetry as a written art form that is somewhat veiled. I think, at times, it's difficult to balance the specific

detail, the weight of the necessary images, with the sense that there's still something to be revealed or discovered.

CR: The poem you've submitted, "Clay," is a new one--new to us, at least. Is this the usual for you, or was it unique in some manner?

EWB: I do work with religious topics from time to time. This is actually a brand-new poem for me. I began it about a month ago, and probably made my final change this morning. I don't think the writing process for this particular poem was unusual for me in that I got the title when I was on a walk with my family and I had a sense that there was a poem there, connected with it, that was waiting to be written. I wrote the first draft of the poem when I got home.

Contributors

Ken Abbott is a Middle Grades Education major at Gainesville College, an amateur bull-rider, and a person of rural ethnicity. His poem "Wearing White" won second prize in this year's Gainesville College writing contest. He served as Editor for this edition of the *Chestatee Review*.

Tim Anderson won second place in the 2002 Gainesville College writing contest for his story "Mistaken Identity". He has tentative plans to attend North Georgia College upon graduation from GC. He is undecided as to a major, as well as to everything else.

Charlie Broadwell is a sophomore journalism major at GC and writes for *The Compass*.

Marlena Childs is a sophomore at GC who has a keen interest in creative writing.

Jessica Davenport is a sophomore at GC, majoring in art. She will be attending Gwinnett Technical College in the fall to study environmental horticulture.

Blake Duncan is currently undecided as to a major. He hopes to soon be promoted to head of cashiers at Ace Hardware. He claims inspiration from J.R.R Tolkien and Douglas Adams.

Terry Emmett is an art major at GC.

Heather Hodges is a freshman at GC and currently undecided as to major. She works on the *Compass* newspaper staff.

Lauren Howard is an art major at GC.

Dreama Johnson won third place in the 2002 Gainesville College writing contest for her short story "Closure", and third place for her poem "Van Gogh's 'Night Stars'"

Selena Johnson won first place in the 20002 Gainesville College writing contest for her poem "Gambling, Whiskey, and the Grandfather Spirit".

Jamie LaNier is a graduating senior at Gainesville College. She will be attending Georgia State in the fall to study Film and Political Science. Her photos were taken during a study-abroad session in the United Kingdom last summer.

Matt Lewis is an English major at Gainesville College. His short story "Moving Day" won first prize in this year's Gainesville College writing contest. He served as Co-editor for this edition of the *Chestatee Review*. He hopes one day to be a real boy.

PS551.C45 2002 C.1
#37425502
Chestatee review

Michelle Morin is enrolled in the seven-to-eight-year plan, and enjoys driving--or did, before the rise in gasoline prices.

Erin O'Callaghan is planning on attending UGA in the fall to study Film, but is currently undecided as to a major. She is the president of the GC Literature & Film Club, which sponsored the 2002 writing contest. She also manages an underground record company.

Amy Pippin is a sophomore art major at GC.

Josh Poole is a journalism major at GC. He will be attending Georgia State University in the fall and hopes ultimately to have a career in public relations.

Stacy Pruitt is a sophomore art major at GC.

Frank Reddy is a journalism and English major at Gainesville College. He plans to continue his English studies at UGA. He wants to write fiction.

Clayton Shaw is a sophomore at GC who is interested in film and writing.